

Molalla River-Table Rock Recreation Area Management Plan



Molalla River near Pine Creek Bridge

June 2010

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Salem District

T6S-R3E, T7S-R3E, T7S-R4E, T7S R5E, Willamette Meridian
Clackamas County, Oregon

Responsible Agency: USDI - Bureau of Land Management

Responsible Official: Cindy Erstrom, Field Manager
Cascades Resource Area
1717 Fabry Road SE
Salem, OR 97306
(503) 315-5969

For further information, contact: Zachary Jarrett, Project Lead (503) 375-5610

Environmental Assessment Number: DOI-BLM-OR-S040-2010-0003-EA

BLM
Salem District



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BLM/OR/WA/AE-10/068+1792

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Interdisciplinary Team of Preparers

Bureau of Land Management, Salem District

Project lead, Recreation Resources	Zachary Jarrett
Recreation Resources	Adam Milnor
Fisheries	Bruce Zoellick
Wildlife Biologist	Jim England
Hydrologist	Patrick Hawe
Botanical Resources	Terry Fennell
Archeologist	Heather Ulrich
NEPA coordinator	Carolyn Sands
Silviculture	Alisa Tanner
Roads Engineer	Dan Nevin
Fuels/Non-Native Invasive	Barbara Raible
GIS/Mapping/Soils	Bruce Ahrendt

Executive Summary

The Molalla River/Table Rock Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) is located southeast of the city of Molalla, Oregon in the western Cascade Mountains and includes 27,405 acres administered by the Bureau of Land Management, Salem District. Incorporating scenic portions of the Molalla River as well as adjacent uplands and Table Rock Wilderness, the area provides diverse and popular recreation opportunities for northwest Oregon residents including swimming, picnicking, camping, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, whitewater boating and recreational shooting.

The most popular and accessible portion of the recreation area was acquired by the BLM in the early 1990's. In close proximity to a large proportion of the state's population, the SRMA has seen a steady growth in visitation since the acquisition. This use has resulted in impacts to natural resources and concerns over public safety that necessitates the establishment of an appropriate management strategy. This strategy will guide use and management of recreation resources for the next 15 years.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by the Salem District to present a range of potential management strategies for the Molalla River-Table Rock SRMA and analyze their possible effects on recreation use and the area's natural resources. Each alternative contains direction for overnight use, day use and river access, trails and visitor information.

Alternative A (No Action) proposes continuing current management practices. No large-scale site development would occur. Designated, dispersed camping sites would remain and be managed under current rules and regulations. Day use and river access would continue at their present locations. The trails within the area would be maintained without enhancement or expansion.

Alternative B (Proposed Action) Primitive Camping Emphasis proposes concentrating overnight and day use to locations that minimize natural resource impacts. Camping would be limited to three minimally developed campgrounds, each consisting of 6 to 10 sites. Two improved day use sites would be developed. An overhaul of the Shared Use Trail System would occur and several miles of new trails would be built.

Alternative C Centralized Camping Emphasis proposes concentrating overnight use in a single, developed campground with up to 32 sites. One improved day use site would be developed. Minor changes would be made to the Shared Use Trail System and no new trails would be constructed.

Alternative D Day Use Emphasis proposes prohibiting overnight camping within the recreation area outside of Table Rock Wilderness and making investments in day use recreation. Up to four developed sites would be constructed and a comprehensive interpretive plan would be developed. Portions of the Shared Use Trail System would be fixed and a new riverside trail would be built.

The release of this EA marks the beginning of a formal 30-day comment period. Stakeholders and members of the general public are encouraged to provide feedback regarding the proposed action and management alternatives during this period.

Taking these comments into account, the BLM will formulate and release a final Recreation Area Management Plan. It will be accompanied by a Decision Record that outlines the rationale for the decision, as well as an implementation schedule that identifies the timing of specific projects.

Document Organization

This document contains five chapters and two appendices:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background provides an introduction to the planning area and background on the Molalla River-Table Rock planning process. The chapter defines the purpose and need for management action, and describes the issues and concerns identified during public outreach efforts.

Chapter 2: Alternatives lays out the plan's broad goals and objectives. It describes in detail the four management plan alternatives that are evaluated in this Environmental Assessment.

Chapter 3: Affected Environment describes the planning area including current recreational and socioeconomic conditions as well as the biological and cultural resources within the planning area.

Chapter 4: Environmental Effects assesses the impacts of each alternative on the resources described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5: Conformance and Supplemental Authorities identifies the planning documents that guide the development of this plan, as well as the supplemental authorities and regulations that guide BLM management actions.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) explains why the actions outlined in this document will not have a significant effect on the human environment and why, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Appendix A: Table Rock Wilderness Plan Update revisits the recreation components of the Table Rock Wilderness Management Plan, completed in 1987. It describes management actions taken since plan completion as well as the current management situation. It establishes revised goals and objectives for wilderness management, and identifies specific management direction and actions for visitor use, trails and visitor information.

Appendix B: Public Outreach

Source material used in the preparation of this document can be found in the Bibliography.

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